ENROLMENT OF IMMATURE SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES PROGRAMS

Early Childhood Services Branch
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ENROLMENT OF IMMATURE SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES PROGRAMS

1. THE ISSUE

1.1 Background

Prior to January 1, 1984, the Early Childhood Services (ECS) Branch funded school-aged children in ECS programs without much question. During the seventies and even the very earliest eighties, budget overruns were met with relative ease; however, in 1982-83 and 1983-84, the advent of restraint measures drew attention to the uncertainty of ECS budget planning because more and more school-aged children, especially the handicapped, were remaining indefinitely in ECS programs.

In addition to budget problems, basic education was seen as not assuming its responsibility for school-aged children, especially the handicapped.

In conjunction with the simplification of grants through the Management and Finance Plan (MFP) in early 1984, the ECS Branch attempted to shift the enrolment of all school-aged children into basic education where they would be funded through the School Foundation Program Fund (SFPF). The first announcement to this effect went out in the Information Bulletin on May 2, 1984 (Appendix 7.1)

Reaction to the shift of all school-aged children to basic education and SFPF irrespective of program placement resulted in a strong reaction from parents who had delayed their children's enrolment in an ECS program for one year. They believed that their children would suddenly face enrolment in Grade 1 without the benefit of a year in ECS. This was especially true in the case of parents who were planning to enrol their children in an ECS program run by a private operator. Some school boards and counties soon pointed out that they did not intend to set up agreements with private ECS operators who had counted on delayed enrolments as well as repeat enrolments in their 1984-85 budgets. Consequently, in addition to the parents who had delayed their children's enrolment in ECS, parents whose children were scheduled for a second year in a private ECS program were concerned as were the private ECS operators whose financial solvency depended upon such enrolments for which funds were suddenly put into jeopardy by school boards and counties which had refused to develop tuition agreements on behalf of the school-aged children involved.

The strong reaction was expressed almost solely on behalf of non-handicapped children whose needs were related to maturational features, not discreet handicaps. As the result of persistent objection, the Honourable David King decided, in consultation with departmental staff, to alter the policy outlined in the first Information Bulletin

to accommodate, on an interim basis, delayed enrolments and second-year-in-ECS enrolments through ECS grants paid directly to the programs in which school-aged "immature" children were enrolled for 1984-85.

1.2 Interim Policy for 1984-85

The interim policy on the enrolment of immature school-aged children was publicized in the second edition of the Information Bulletin (see Appendix 7.2 for the text of G., page 9.5).

Subsequently, the policy was iterated in Part 4, Section 1(c), page 4 of the School Grants Manual for school-aged immature children enrolled in ECS programs and in Part 4, Section 2.3.12, page 5 of the School Grants Manual for mildly and moderately handicapped pupils (see Appendix 7.3 for both policy statements).

Mr. King initiated the change in policy for immature child with the following condition outlined in the note found after Part 4, Section 1(d) on page 5 of the School Grants Manual:

> **With respect to (c), 1984-85 will be a transitional year during which these policies will be monitored and reviewed in terms of their educational impact, cost and incidence of application throughout the province.**

1.3 Observations on Policy Implementation

Mr. King's reconsideration quelled the immediate furore but the issue retained high profile all year long. By far the greater proportion of action requests handled by the ECS Branch addressed the matter primarily from the point of view that writers wanted a guarantee that the policy would be retained so that, in essence, parents would be able to decide when to enrol their children in ECS for the first time and, in consultation with ECS staff, decide to retain their children in an ECS program for a second year.

Nearly all the writers of letters to the Minister recommended that ECS grants should support children enrolled in ECS programs irrespective of age. However, on the basis of the initial policy statement in the Information Bulletin (May 2, 1984), some cooperative school jurisdictions immediately set up agreements with private operators e.g. Red Deer Public School District with Fairview Kindergarten Society for fifteen school-aged children. On the other hand, some school jurisdictions e.g. Calgary Board of Education, Calgary RCSSD and the County of Red Deer flatly refused to implement agreements with private ECS operators. The latter instances precipitated the loudest objection.

Once the amended policy was put into place, operational acceptance was immediate. Only in a few instances, was policy implementation problematic.

In summary, the greatest implementation problem was constant pressure from clients to retain the policy in line with ECS philosophy. As well, the prospect of entrance into Grade 1 seemed to precipitate the greatest demand to retain flexibility in ECS enrolment and entrance into the first grade program.

2. THE SURVEY

2.1 Questions To Be Answered By All ECS Operators

In addition to the basic questions on cost, incidence of school-aged children's enrolment in the ECS program and educational impact of delayed or second year enrolment in ECS programs, questions were raised on the following items which were gleaned from the action requests, telephone calls, letters to the ECS Branch and casual discussions which occurred from July through December, 1984:

2.1.1 cut-off dates for Grade 1 enrolment (actual, proposed and recommended);
2.1.2 person(s) responsible for decision to delay ECS enrolment;
2.1.3 number of second-year-in-ECS enrolments based on formal testing results;
2.1.4 tests used in 2.1.3 above;
2.1.5 type of ECS programming required by immature children;
2.1.6 child's entitlement to ECS before Grade 1; and
2.1.7 financial responsibility after one year of ECS programming.

2.2 Construction of the Survey Instrument

Planning Services and the ECS Consultants from Program Delivery were involved in the design of the survey instrument and the content respectively (the survey instrument can be seen in Appendix 7.4).

The survey was then mailed along with a covering letter from the Director of Early Childhood Services on January 22, 1985 to every ECS operator in the province. Although operators were free to derive their responses in whatever way they wished, the ECS Branch asked for one survey per jurisdiction; this meant that larger jurisdictions would present aggregate information.

3. RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

3.1 Response to the Survey

A total of 383 surveys were mailed. Of this number, 281 (73%) were sent to private ECS operators; 102 (27%) were sent to public jurisdictions. The deadline for return was originally set for February 15, 1985.

A total of 299 surveys which were returned represents a response level of 78%.

A telephone follow-up was undertaken by Planning Services on March 1, 1985. An extension of two weeks had been given after many delays in the receipt of the survey became evident; the following table shows the disposition of surveys not received on or before February 28, 1985 by the ECS Branch:

3.1.1 sent (but not received by ECS as of 85.02.28) - 29
3.1.2 not received by operator - 39
3.1.3 not sent because of nil report - 12
3.1.4 lost after receipt - 4 (total of 84).

3.2 Survey Analyses

Each completed survey was assigned an accession number (1 through 299) and the correct jurisdiction code to permit individual survey retrieval, response profiles by public and private ECS operator type and regional profiles by private, public and aggregate response.

The narrative responses were then analyzed for content and frequency counts were given to each identified response as it was recognized in successive surveys. These statements were consolidated by the researcher and later collapsed into fewer groups by the Associate Director of Early Childhood Services. The questions or parts thereof which were analyzed in this way were:

3.2.1 2(a), 2(b) and 2(c)
3.2.2 4(c) and 4(e) Explain
3.2.3 6
3.2.4 The COMMENT for each of 1, 2, 3 and 4, Section II (Viewpoints) and the open-ended question (5), all on pages 4 and 5 of the survey.

Numerical responses and selections between/among given choices were key punched and analyzed for frequencies, percentages and splits by operator type and zones. This task was done by Computer Services at the request of Planning Services.

3.3 Survey Results

3.3.1 1984/85 Actual and 1985/86 Projected Enrolment of Immature School-aged Children in ECS Programs

A total of 2,456 immature school-aged children are currently enrolled in ECS programs (500 in private ECS programs and 1,956 in ECS programs operated by school jurisdictions). All enrolled immature school-aged children represented 7.8% of the reported total ECS enrolment of 31,368.

The incidence of immature school-aged children in ECS programs was lowest in Zone 1 (4%), slightly higher in Zones 6 and 5 (6% and 7% respectively) and highest in Zones 2, 3 and 4 (10%, 9% and 9% respectively).

Nearly 57% of the reported immature school-aged children are presently attending an ECS program for the second year; 44% of all reported immature school-aged children now enrolled in the (1984-85) ECS program experienced a one year delay in their initial ECS enrolment.

Projected enrolment of immature school-aged children in the 1985-86 ECS program stands at 2,050. This projection does not include the Edmonton Public School Board which reported no immature school-aged enrolments in 1984-85. Despite uncertainty, the projected number is not unreasonably different from the number enrolled in 1984-85.

A complete analysis of 1984-85 and projected 1985-86 enrolments can be found in Appendix 7.5.

3.3.2 Cut-off Dates for Grade One Enrolment

The three most frequently reported cut-off dates in 2(a) and 2(b), page 2 were:

	Public	Separate	Total
• February 28 (29)	127	42	169
• December 31	63	18	81
• March 1	24	8	32

The February 28 (29) and March 1 cut-offs reflect compatability with departmental policy; grant availability is predicated on these dates.

The December 31 cut-off, however, reflects a popular move from the February 28 (29) - March 1 cut-off date to eliminate January and February births from enrolment. Several jurisdictions provide conditional enrolment of the January - February births for a period of time after shifting to the December 31 cut-off. The same conditional enrolment criterion holds true for jurisdictions whose cut-off date is February 28 (29) or March 1.

Private ECS operators attempt to fix their cut-off dates to match those of the jurisdictions(s) into which children will move for their first grade programs. Difficulties arise if there are two jurisdictions each having a different cut-off

date; some difficulty may arise for the child who transfers from a February 28 cut-off to, for example, a September 1 cut-off. Most transfers are accommodated irrespective of age so long as they were enrolled in an ECS program before transferring. The analysis can be seen in Appendix 7.6.

3.3.3 Explanation for Immature School-aged Children Spending a Second Year (But Not The First) in a Particular Program. (4(c), page 2)

Nearly all responses indicated that the child had been in a totally different program, had only been in a preschool program for a few months before moving or had moved to Alberta from another province or nation where standards were different.

3.3.4 Persons Who Decided To Delay ECS Enrolment By One Year. (4(e), page 3)

In almost all cases, respondents chose one or more of the four individuals listed and also reported that the same individual(s) would be making the decisions in 1985-86. Anyone reporting "other" almost all named the principal with a few respondents designating the community health nurse.

According to the analysis reported in Appendix 7.7, the parent was cited most often as the person taking responsibility for placement decisions. The second most frequently reported decision-maker was the teacher-parent combination. A significant number of ECS operators (10 private and 6 public) indicated that placement decisions were made by the parent, teacher and the school counsellor or psychologist.

3.3.5 Tests Used in Placement Decisions

In the case of all school-aged children enrolled in the 1984-85 program (4(b) and 4(c) on page 2 and 4(d) on page 3), respondents were asked to report tests used to determine placement if, in fact, formal testing was used to determine delayed enrolment or a second year in ECS.

In the three tables which appear in Appendix 7.8, tests reported five or more times are shown by type of operator. The third table shows commonality of tests where both types of operator reported use of a certain test five or more times.

Of the tests used most frequently, there was an extraordinary similarity in the tests used by both public and private operators. The latter reported the use of the McCarthy Scales only once while the former reported the use of ABC Tests twice. Regional workshops, contracting diagnostic and assessment services and university training probably account for the compatability in tests used; however, further study would have to take place in order to find out why there is such a prevalence of testing at the ECS level.

3.3.6 Section II (Viewpoints)

Four statements were presented. Respondents could AGREE or DISAGREE and provide written comments if they wished to do so. Following are the positions taken on each statement together with a brief summary of the comments which either substantiated agreement or provided an alternative view in cases of disagreement with the position presented in a statement. The full analysis can be reviewed in Appendix 7.9.

3.3.6.1 Statement 1

School-aged children who are enrolled in an ECS program because of immaturity require regular ECS programming ONLY.

This statement resulted in the least definitive position of the four. Provincially, there was 51% agreement with the statement; 37% disagreement. Unspecified or double responses accounted for the remaining 12% of the 299 respondents. Proportionately, public and private operators took opposite positions: public agreement was 39% versus 46% disagreement while private agreement was 56% versus 33% disagreement.

Comments revealed the reason for ambivalence; the majority emphasized that the ECS program should address the individual needs of the immature child, especially during a second year in ECS or, if only scheduled for one year in an ECS program, towards the end of that year. ECS programming is, by definition, needs based; therefore, programming can't be as cut-and-dried as it was portrayed in the statement . . . as though the program were a prescription.

School system respondents more frequently emphasized program flexibility than the private sector; this difference may reflect the availability of personnel, resources and a wider range of placement possibilities.

3.3.6.2 Statement 2

Before entering basic education (first grade, year one, etc.) every child is entitled to ONE year of ECS programming supported by ECS grants irrespective of age.

The response to this statement was definitive; 73% of the respondents agreed with the statement; 18% disagreed. Unspecified or double responses accounted for the remaining 9% of the respondents. Public and private views were almost identical.

Comments revealed two significant considerations: that every child be entitled to at least one year of ECS programming but that ECS program enrolment not be seen as a must or prerequisite to Grade 1. A large proportion of the respondents emphasized the value of an ECS experience in preparation for the first grade and a few private operators noted that no one over the age of seven years should have to be in an ECS program to have needs met.

3.3.6.3 Statement 3

After support by ECS grants in an ECS program for one year, certain children may, because of immaturity, require additional time in an ECS program. The financial responsibility for ECS programming beyond the first year should be undertaken by Grade 1-12 authorities/grants (not ECS grants) even if the child is in an ECS program.

There was widespread disagreement with this position. Provincially, 77% of the respondents disagreed; 11% agreed. The public-private split occurred again on this item although the directionality of their views was the same. Public operator disagreement was 59%; agreement was 28%, slightly less than half the disagreement. Private responses were much more definitive: 85% disagreement versus 5% agreement.

The comments conclusively recommended that children enrolled in an ECS program beyond the initial year should be funded by ECS grants. Private operators were especially adamant on this point; particularly those who experienced flat refusal, on the part of school boards, to draw up an agreement with private ECS operators so that a school-aged child might attend a private ECS program in the child's home community. Some school jurisdictions noted that they wanted to report the children on basic education enrolment forms, collect full School Foundation Program Funding for such children and arrange a placement suited to the child's needs. The majority of the respondents, including several school boards e.g. Calgary Board of Education, stated a preference for ECS i.e. 60% SFPF funding for children enrolled in ECS programs. The most prevalent term used by both public and private respondents in describing the potential school board - private operator interface was "hassle" which all could do without.

3.3.6.4 Statement 4

In consultation with ECS staff, parents should be able to delay the enrolment of their children in an ECS program.

This position received marked agreement provincially; 88% versus 4% disagreement. Public and private respondents reacted almost identically to the statement, the public presenting 90% agreement versus 87% for the private and 3% versus 5% disagreement.

Comments revealed, however, that a parent's decision should be final after consultation for initial enrolment; the finality of the parent's decision to enrol a child in a second year of ECS was not expressed quite as adamantly. In such cases, respondents frequently commented, "Surely such a decision has to be a team activity."

3.3.6.5 Other Comments, Observations and Recommendations

The responses to this request reiterated, in the most part, positions taken in the comments which followed each of the four statements.

One of the most prevalently mentioned observations had to do with increasing stringency in Grade 1 program expectations of children which was, in part, accredited to Alberta Education's emphasis upon provincial standardized tests at the end of Grade 3. In addition, respondents emphasized the need for additional flexibility in children's access to more than one year in ECS to permit a child additional opportunity to acquire a level of maturity with which to cope with a Grade 1 program driven also by a response to the public's demand for a "back to the basics" first grade program.

4. FINDINGS

The following findings arise from the numerical and subjective data gleaned from 299 completed and returned surveys:

4.1 Enrolment in an ECS program was delayed by one year for 1,091 children attending the 1984-85 ECS program (44% of all immature school-aged children enrolled in the 1984-85 ECS program);

4.2 A significant number of immature school-aged children are presently enrolled in their second year of the ECS program (56% of all immature school aged children attending the 1984-85 ECS program);

4.3 A significant number of immature school-aged children are enrolled in the 1984-85 ECS program [7.8% of the total enrolment of the 299 responding public and private ECS operators (2,456 out of 31,368 children)];

4.4 Less than 25% of all reported immature children were formally tested in conjunction with their initial and/or second-year enrolments in ECS programs. An extensive range of formal diagnostic, assessment and observational materials had been used to accomplish the reported testing;

4.5 Consistent with ECS philosophy, goals and program dimensions, ECS operators provide special program elements for children whose needs demand more than what one might call a "regular" ECS program;

4.6 Parents should, in consultation with ECS staff, assume responsibility for deciding when to enrol their children in an ECS program for the first time OR for deciding to waive the ECS experience for their children in favor of direct enrolment into the Grade 1 program;

4.7 Enrolment of children in a second year of ECS should be the result of a joint decision involving parents, ECS staff and if appropriate, other professionals;

4.8 Children who are enrolled in an ECS program should be supported by ECS grants, not by SFPF through agreements between school boards and private operators; and

4.9 ECS operators are extremely sensitive to the developmental needs of preschoolers and, consequently, see themselves as being responsible for the best possible preparation of children for Grade 1 through the ECS program; the ECS operators unanimously agree that when extra time is required by a child in an ECS program to acquire enough developmental stability and competence to cope with Grade 1, the child should be able to have that opportunity at ECS expense and irrespective of age.

4.10 Approximate cost of maintaining 1,393 second-year-in-ECS children in the 1984-85 ECS program will be $1,500,000 including transportation.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Findings which arise from survey results lead to the following conclusions:

5.1 Enough immature school-aged children are presently in ECS programs or already identified for enrolment in 1985-86 to warrant policy, guidelines and procedures which will accommodate such children in ECS programs at ECS expense;

5.2 Because parents wish to be directly involved in decisions about program placement for their children, departmental policy, guidelines and procedures must facilitate such involvement; and

5.3 The broadest possible range of entry points into the ECS program should be clearly enuniciated through departmental guidelines and procedures so as to give parents specific information and enough lead time to make appropriate placement decisions in consultation with ECS staff, other professionals and school jurisdictions.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Six recommendations arise from the survey findings and conclusions. Each recommendation is supported by a brief rationale. The recommendations are compatible with the School Act, Section 142(1), the Program Policy Manual and the School Grants Manual. As well, the propositions are in harmony with Management and Finance plan principles and the nature of the recommendations is consistent with the principles which appear in Partners in Education.

The recommendations, if approved, are scheduled for implementation in the 1985-86 ECS program year.

1. **THAT** the Early Childhood Services policy statement in the Program Policy Manual (Revised 1984-09-17) be amended to read as follows:

> **For the purposes of enhancing individual abilities and future educational opportunities, Alberta Education supports the provision of integrated services, through parents, staff, and community, that address the developmental needs of each child before school entrance and developmentally immature children who are six years or older on the date of school opening per Section 142(1) of the School Act, subject to joint agreement between parents/guardians and the school jurisdiction in which they are resident.**

RATIONALE

The policy statement, as amended, speaks to flexibility on the part of Alberta Education in respect of children whose developmental immaturity puts their potential to succeed in first grade activities at risk. Such children may, via the amended policy statement, delay enrolment in Grade 1 until they are more able to handle the program. Handicapped children, on the other hand, are able to access up to three years of specialized ECS programming before they are school-aged. Because specialized programming is an ongoing requirement of nearly all handicapped children, transition into special education programs from specialized ECS programs is a logical consequence for such children and should, in no way, impose a hardship upon them.

2. **THAT** Guideline #6, page 7 in the Program Policy Manual (Revised 1984.09.17) be amended as follows:

> **Children eligible for ECS programs are:**
>
> **(a) those with special needs who are:**
>
> **i) hearing impaired and/or severely disabled i.e. eligible for the program unit grant and at least 2 years 6 months of age as of September 1; or**

ii) mildly or moderately disabled and at least 3 years 6 months of age as of September 1;

(b) those who are at least 4 years 6 months of age as of September 1;

(c) those who were enrolled in a regular ECS program for one year, subsequently require a second year in a regular ECS program because of developmental immaturity and are at least 5 years 6 months of age as of September 1;

(d) those for whom initial enrolment in a regular ECS program has been delayed one year by parents/guardians on the basis of developmental immaturity and are at least 5 years 6 months of age as of September 1; and

(e) subject to joint agreement between parents/guardians and the school jurisdiction in which the parents/guardians are resident, those who are developmentally immature and are at least 6 years of age as of September 1.

RATIONALE

In a few instances, parents/guardians may wish to delay the enrolment of their children in an ECS program until the child is six years or older at school opening; in a few other instances, a child may not, after one year in an ECS program, be able to cope with the first grade program. In either case, upon joint agreement by parents/guardians and the school jurisdiction in which the parents/guardians are resident, such children may be enrolled in an ECS program and supported by ECS grants.

3. **THAT** the following procedural statement be incorporated into the PROCEDURES presently outlined on pages 8 and 9 of the Program Policy Manual:

> **In the event that the parent/guardian, professionals including ECS staff and the school jurisdiction in which the child is resident cannot agree upon the placement of an immature child, who is six years or older at school opening, in an ECS program, the issue should be directed to the Local Placement Appeals Committee for resolution.**

RATIONALE

There may be instances in which the placement of a school-aged child in an ECS program cannot be reconciled by the parents/guardians, professionals including ECS staff and the school jurisdiction responsible for the child. The recently mandated Local Placement Appeals Committee structure presents an avenue through which resolution to such issues may be brought.

4. **THAT** POLICY 1.3.8(c)(i and ii), page 4, Section 1, Part 4 of the School Grants Manual be amended as follows in respect of school-aged immature children:

> . . . CHILD means a person
>
> who is eligible to enter Grade One per school board policy AND in accordance with the definition of PUPIL under the School Foundation Program Fund Regulation, Section 142(1) of the School Act and Part 1, Section 1 of this document AND who is deemed immature by the parent/guardian in consultation with professionals including ECS staff and the school jurisdiction in which the parent/guardian is resident AND who:
>
> (i) although eligible, did not enrol in an Early Childhood Services program in 1984/85; OR
>
> (ii) attended an Early Childhood Services program in 1984/85 AND because the child's parent/guardian, professionals including ECS staff and the school jurisdiction in which the parent/guardian is resident jointly agreed upon a second year in an Early Childhood Services program;
>
> may be counted as Early Childhood Services children under this section AND the claiming Early Childhood Services operator is eligible to receive the basic operational Early Childhood Services grant in respect of such children . . .

RATIONALE

In keeping with Early Childhood Services philosophy, goals and program dimensions, a child's progress into basic education must be determined on the grounds of developmental maturity as well as chronological age. In addition, parents/guardians should have the right to decide when (or if) their children should enrol in the ECS program for the first time. In keeping with Section 142(1) of the School Act, parents/guardians may determine ECS enrolment until their children are six years of age as of school opening: at that point, the decision to enrol children in the ECS program would depend upon agreement among the responsible school board, professionals including ECS staff AND the parents/guardians. This arrangement offers a wide range of programming alternative for preschool children who, on one hand, are not markedly handicapped but, on the other hand, are not deemed to be developmentally mature enough to handle Grade 1 expectations competently.

5. **THAT** adequate budget allocations be made to meet the cost of children who are enrolled in the ECS program for a second and, in rare instances, a third year (the third year being subject to school jurisdiction approval).

RATIONALE

The additional flexibility which is inherent in Recommendations 1, 2 and 3 will result in an additional calling on the ECS budget. The allocation could be based on a maximum of children at the basic instructional grant level e.g. in 1985-86, 1300 children at $1,037 would result in the need for a budget supplement of approximately $1,500,000 including transportation.

The cost at the ECS level will most likely offset potentially higher costs in basic education where, children who are not permitted more time to prepare for Grade 1, are likely to fail and require addition SFPF while they repeat one or more grades.

6. **THAT** POLICY 2.3.12, page 5, Section 2, Part 4 of the School Grants Manual remain the same in 1985-86 in respect to handicapped children.

RATIONALE

Any difficulties related to the implementation of this policy in 1984-85 were minimal. Handicapped children who may have had up to three years of specialized ECS programming by the time they are eligible for SFPF should be served through basic education so that long, as well as short, term program plans can be put into place for such children.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 7.1

Excerpt from the first Information Bulletin (1984 Grants to Schools) which was published on May 2, 1984.

From the Summary, page 7.4:

ITEM 7

CHILDREN WHO ARE OF AN AGE TO BE ELIGIBLE TO ENTER GRADE ONE AS PER BOARD POLICY AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SCHOOL FOUNDATION PROGRAM FUND REGULATION, SCHEDULE, 1(E)(ii) SHALL BE CLAIMED AS ELIGIBLE PUPILS UNDER THE SCHOOL FOUNDATION PROGRAM FUND AND AS RESIDENT PUPILS UNDER ALBERTA REGULATION 346/78, AS AMENDED. THESE CHILDREN SHALL NOT BE COUNTED AS EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES CHILDREN.

APPENDIX 7.2

Excerpt from the second Information Bulletin (1984 Grants to Schools) which was published on June 1, 1984.

From Section 9.2, GRANTS, RATES AND RELATED INFORMATION, page 9.5:

(a) Policy

G: **ENROLMENT OF IMMATURE CHILDREN**

CHILDREN DEEMED IMMATURE BY PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND LOCAL PROFESSIONALS/ECS STAFF WHO:

- **ALTHOUGH ELIGIBLE, DID NOT ENROL IN AN ECS PROGRAM IN 1984-85.**

- **ATTENDED AN ECS PROGRAM IN 1983-84 AND, BECAUSE THEIR PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND LOCAL PROFESSIONALS/ECS STAFF JOINTLY AGREED UPON A SECOND YEAR IN AN ECS PROGRAM, MAY BE COUNTED AS ECS CHILDREN IN 1984-85.**

THE CLAIMING ECS OPERATOR IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE THE BASIC OPERATIONAL ECS GRANT.

(b) Policy

H: **ENROLMENT OF HANDICAPPED (CATEGORY A INCLUDING PROGRAM UNIT) CHILDREN.**

HANDICAPPED CHILDREN APPROVED IN THE 1983-84 PROGRAM YEAR AS CATEGORY A (INCLUDING PROGRAM UNIT) WHO ARE ELIGIBLE TO ENTER GRADE ONE PER SCHOOL BOARD POLICY AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SCHOOL FOUNDATION PROGRAM FUND (SFPF) REGULATION SCHEDULE 1(h)(ii) SHALL BE CLAIMED AS ELIGIBLE PUPILS UNDER THE SFPF AND AS RESIDENT PUPILS UNDER ALBERTA REGULATION 346/78 AS AMENDED. SUCH ELIGIBLE HANDICAPPED CHILDREN SHALL NOT BE COUNTED AS ECS CHILDREN. THE CLAIMING SCHOOL BOARD IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE FULL SFPF BASIC (INSTRUCTIONAL) SUPPORT FOR SUCH CHILDREN IF, ON THE SEPTEMBER ENROLMENT REPORT, THEY ARE REPORTED AS RECIPIENTS OF A FULL OR HALF-DAY PROGRAM, INCLUDING ECS.

APPENDIX 7.3

Excerpts from the School Grants Manual which superceded the two information bulletins cited in Appendices 7.1 and 7.2

(a) From Part 4, Section 1, page 4 with respect to immature school-aged children:

1.3.8 CHILD means a person

(c) who is eligible to enter grade one per school board policy and in accordance with the definition of PUPIL under the School Foundation Program Fund Regulation and Part 1, Section 1 of this document and who is deemed immature by parents and local professionals and Early Childhood Services staff and who:

(i) although eligible, did not enroll in an Early Childhood Services program in 1983-84, or

(ii) attended an Early Childhood Services program in 1983/84 and, because their parents/guardians and local professionals/ECS staff jointly agreed upon a second year in an Early Childhood Services program may be counted as Early Childhood Services children under this section and the claiming Early Childhood Services operator is eligible to receive the basic operational Early Childhood Services grant in respect of these children, and

(b) From Part 4, Section 2, page 5 with respect to handicapped children:

2.3.12 Handicapped children who are eligible to enter Grade One per school board policy and in accordance with the School Foundation Program Fund (SFPF) Regulation and under Part 1, Section 1 of this document shall be claimed as eligible pupils under the SFPF and as resident pupils under Alberta Regulation, 346/78 as amended. Such eligible handicapped shall not be counted as Early Childhood Services children. The claiming school board is eligible to receive full SFPF Basic (Instructional) support for such children if, on the September Enrolment Report, they are reported as recipients of a full or half-day program, which may include an Early Childhood Services program.

Early Childhood Services

SURVEY OF "IMMATURE" SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN ENROLLED IN ECS PROGRAMS

Alberta Education

Early Childhood Services

January, 1985

Alberta EDUCATION

SURVEY OF "IMMATURE[1]" SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN ENROLLED IN ECS PROGRAMS

1. _____
Name of School Jurisdiction/Private ECS Society/Private School

2. (a) _____
IF SCHOOL JURISDICTION, name of DESIGNATED OFFICER

(b) _____
IF PRIVATE ECS OPERATOR or PRIVATE SCHOOL, name of COORDINATOR

3. _____ _____
Address Postal Code

4. _____
Telephone

SECTION I (Enrolment Data)

1. (a) If no "immature" school-aged children were enrolled in your program in 1984-85 and if you do not anticipate any for 1985, please check the NIL REPORT box (immediately below) and return survey to the Early Childhood Services Branch in Edmonton.

☐ NIL REPORT

(b) If you are submitting a NIL REPORT but wish to comment on the issue of school-aged "immature" children, please check the COMMENT box (immediately below) and present your remarks in SECTION II of this survey.

☐ COMMENT

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1 An "Immature" ECS child is a child:
(a) whose enrolment in a regular ECS program has been delayed, or
(b) who is enrolled in a regular ECS program for a second year.

"Immature" children are not eligible for special needs grants; nor do they receive extraordinary programming.

2. Cut-off date(s)[2] for Grade 1 enrolment in your school jurisdiction or the school jurisdiction(s) into which private ECS operator's children will go for Grade 1.

   (a) Public School Jurisdiction cut-off date: _____

   (b) Separate School Jurisdiction cut-off date: _____

   (c) Special Comments (if any)_____

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Total ECS enrolment in your jurisdiction as of December 31, 1984:

   [ ]

4. (a) Total number of "immature" school-aged children (beyond usual ECS age) enrolled in the ECS program offered by your jurisdiction.

1984-85 ECS program year (actual number)	1985-86 ECS program year (projected number)
[ ]	[ ]

   (b) Total number of "immature" school-aged children enrolled in the ECS program offered by your jurisdiction spending second year in your ECS program (having spent the first year in your program as well).

1984-85 ECS program year (actual number)	1985-86 ECS program year (projected number)
[ ]	[ ]

   (c) Total number of "immature" school-aged children spending second year in your ECS program (having spent the first year in another jurisdiction's ECS program).

1984-85 ECS program year (actual number)	1985-86 ECS program year (projected number)
[ ]	[ ]
Explain	Explain
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

---

2 Cut-off date refers to the acceptable birthdate for a child to enter Grade 1 in the local school jurisdiction.

(d)	Total number of "immature" school-aged children who were eligible to attend an ECS program but were enrolled one year later than they could have been.	1984-85 ECS program year (actual number) _____ _____ The sum of 4(b), 4(c), 4(d) should be the same as the number reported in 4(a)	1985-86 ECS program year (projected number) _____ _____ The sum of 4(b), 4(c), 4(d) should be the same as the number reported in 4(a).
(e)	In the majority of cases, for the children reported in 4(d), who decided that these children are "immature" (i.e., should start ECS one year late)? CHECK ONE OR MORE	1984-85 ECS program year 1. __ parent/ guardian 2. __ teacher 3. __ school counsellor 4. __ school psychologist 5. __ other Explain "Other" _____ _____ _____	1985-86 ECS program year 1. __ parent/ guardian 2. __ teacher 3. __ school counsellor 4. __ school psychologist 5. __ other Explain "Other" _____ _____ _____

5. <u>The number of children</u>, reported in 4(b), 4(c), or 4(d), who were <u>formally tested</u> to decide placement (second year in ECS or one year delay in ECS enrolment).

1984-85 ECS program year (actual number)	1985-86 ECS program year (projected number)
_____	_____
_____	_____

6. If any children were formally tested, please list test(s) used:

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

(d) _____

SECTION II (Viewpoints)

Following are four statements which are based on beliefs, expectations and recommendations expressed by both parents and ECS program operators. You are invited to comment on each statement.

1. School-aged children who are enrolled in an ECS program because of immaturity require regular ECS programming ONLY.
   _____ AGREE
   _____ DISAGREE

   COMMENT _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. Before entering basic education (first grade, year one, etc.) every child is entitled to ONE year of ECS programming supported by ECS grants irrespective of age.
   _____ AGREE
   _____ DISAGREE

   COMMENT _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. After support by ECS grants in an ECS program for one year, certain children may, because of immaturity, require additional time in an ECS program. The financial responsibility for ECS programming beyond the first year should be undertaken by Grade 1-12 authorities/grants (not ECS grants) even if the child is in an ECS program.
   _____ AGREE
   _____ DISAGREE

   COMMENT _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

4. In consultation with ECS staff, parents should be able to delay the enrolment of their children in an ECS program.

_____ AGREE
_____ DISAGREE

COMMENT _____

_____

_____

_____

5. Please provide comments, observations and recommendations you may have in addition to information provided elsewhere in this survey.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE IN RESPONDING TO THIS SURVEY

Return one copy of this survey to:

The Associate Director of Early Childhood Services
Alberta Education
10th Floor, West Tower, Devonian Building
11160 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 0L2

1984/5 ACTUAL AND 1985/6 PROJECTED ENROLMENT OF IMMATURE SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN IN ECS PROGRAMS

ZONE		TOTAL ENROLMENT 1984-85	TOTAL IMMATURE SCHOOL-AGED ENROLMENT IN ECS 1984-85	% IMMATURE ENROLMENT OF TOTAL ENROLMENT	NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN ECS FOR SECOND YEAR 1984-85	% SECOND YEAR ENROLMENT OF IMMATURE ENROLMENT	NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHOSE ECS ENROLMENT DELAYED ONE YEAR BEYOND ELIGIBILITY	% DELAYED ECS ENROLMENT OF IMMATURE ENROLMENT	PROJECTED IMMATURE SCHOOL-AGED CHILD ENROLMENT IN 1985-86
1	Public	1,582	65	4%	42	65%	24	37%	36
	Private	278	5	2%	4	80%	1	20%	12
	Total	1,860	70	4%	46	66%	25	36%	48
2	Public	1,967	196	9%	126	64%	75	38%	209
	Private	422	50	12%	33	66%	21	40%	58
	Total	2,384	246	10%	159	65%	96	39%	267
3	Public	11,720	1,044	9%	588	56%	461	44%	1,013
	Private	938	90	10%	59	66%	32	36%	86
	Total	12,658	1,134	9%	647	57%	493	43%	1,099
4	Public	827	53	6%	31	58%	23	43%	62
	Private	1,504	169	11%	72	43%	100	59%	156
	Total	2,331	222	9%	103	46%	123	55%	218
5	Public	6,186	407	7%	258	63%	149	37%	23
	Private	1,869	144	8%	77	53%	69	48%	190
	Total	8,055	551	7%	335	61%	218	40%	213
6	Public	3,455	191	6%	77	40%	118	62%	164
	Private	620	42	7%	26	62%	18	43%	51
	Total	4,075	233	6%	103	44%	136	58%	215
Total Public		25,737	1,956	7.6%	1,122	57.4%	850	43.5%	1,507
Total Private		5,631	500	8.9%	271	54.2%	241	48.2%	553
Total Province		31,368	2,456	7.8%	1,393	56.7%	1,091	44.2%	2,050

APPENDIX 7.6

CUT-OFF DATES FOR GRADE 1 ENROLMENT

2(a) Range and Incidence of Public School Cut-off Dates

CUT-OFF DATE	FREQUENCY
September 1	2
September 30	5
October 31	7
December 31	63
January 1	1
January 31	18
February 28 (29)	127
March 1	24

2(b) Range and Incidence of Separate School Cut-off Dates

CUT-OFF DATE	FREQUENCY
September 1	2
September 30	0
October 31	0
December 31	18
January 1	1
January 31	0
February 28 (29)	42
March 1	8

2(c) **Special Comments**

Very few respondents provided special comments. In order of frequency, the following observations were made:

- cut-off date should be December 31
- cut-off date should be September 1
- January and February births should be treated as special cases; such children tend to be viewed as "at risk" and potential failures or underachievers
- where coterminus public and separate school systems have differing cut-offs, parents sometimes go for the earlier one first and then the alternative
- if child is not 6 years old by September 1 and does not pass a readiness test, the child should be considered immature and therefore stay out of Grade 1 for another year.

PERSONS MAKING IMMATURE CHILD PLACEMENT DECISIONS

	FREQUENCIES BY ZONE														
	ZONE 1		ZONE 2		ZONE 3		ZONE 4		ZONE 5		ZONE 6		SUB-TOTALS		TOTAL
	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	
1. PARENT	7	2	7	3	8	14	1	25	2	17	6	6	31	67	98
2. PARENT AND TEACHER	2	1	3	4	3	6	5	11	2	10	3	4	18	36	54
3. PARENT, TEACHER AND SCHOOL COUNSELLOR OR PSYCHOLOGIST	1	0	0	0	4	2	3	0	2	3	0	1	10	6	16

APPENDIX 7.8

TESTS USED IN PLACEMENT DECISIONS

PUBLIC OPERATOR	FREQUENCY
i) Metropolitan Readiness	15
ii) WPPSI	15
iii) Brigance	10
iv) Peabody Tests	9
v) Beery Visual Motor Integration	8
vi) McCarthy Scales	8
vii) Stanford-Binet Form L-M	7

PRIVATE OPERATORS	FREQUENCY
i) Metropolitan Readiness	17
ii) ABC Tests	7
iii) Peabody Tests	7
iv) Beery Visual Motor Integration	5
v) Brigance	5
iv) WPPSI	5

TESTS USED IN COMMON	TOTAL FREQUENCY
i) Metropolitan Readiness	32
ii) WPPSI	20
iii) Peabody Tests	16
iv) Brigance	15
v) Beery Visual Motor Integration	13

POINTS OF VIEW ON THE ENROLMENT OF IMMATURE CHILDREN IN ECS PROGRAMS

ZONE		STATEMENT 1: SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN WHO ARE ENROLLED IN AN ECS PROGRAM BECAUSE OF IMMATURITY REQUIRE ECS PROGRAMMING ONLY.						STATEMENT 2: BEFORE ENTERING BASIC EDUCATION (FIRST GRADE, YEAR ONE, ETC.) EVERY CHILD IS ENTITLED TO ONE YEAR OF ECS PROGRAMMING SUPPORTED BY ECS GRANTS IRRESPECTIVE OF AGE.						STATEMENT 3: AFTER SUPPORT BY ECS GRANTS IN AN ECS PROGRAM FOR ONE YEAR, CERTAIN CHILDREN MAY, BECAUSE OF IMMATURITY, REQUIRE ADDITIONAL TIME IN AN ECS PROGRAM. THE FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ECS PROGRAMMING BEYOND THE FIRST YEAR SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN BY GRADE 1-12 AUTHORITIES/ GRANTS (NOT ECS GRANTS) EVEN IF THE CHILD IS IN AN ECS PROGRAM.						STATEMENT 4: IN CONSULTATION WITH ECS STAFF, PARENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DELAY THE ENROLMENT OF THEIR CHILDREN IN AN ECS PROGRAM.					
		AGREE	#	DISAGREE	#	UNSPECIFIED/ DOUBLE RESPON.	#	AGREE	#	DISAGREE	#	UNSPECIFIED/ DOUBLE RESPON.	#	AGREE	#	DISAGREE	#	UNSPECIFIED/ DOUBLE RESPON.	#	AGREE	#	DISAGREE	#	UNSPECIFIED/ DOUBLE RESPON.	#
1	Public	10	63	4	25	2	12	14	88	2	12	0	0	5	31	10	63	1	6	16	100	0	0	0	0
	Private	5	56	2	22	2	22	7	78	0	0	2	22	0	0	7	78	2	22	6	67	1	11	2	22
	Total	15	60	6	24	4	16	21	84	2	8	2	8	5	20	17	68	3	12	22	88	1	4	2	8
2	Public	6	50	5	42	1	8	6	50	5	42	1	8	2	17	9	75	1	8	11	92	1	8	0	0
	Private	8	53	6	40	1	7	12	80	2	13	1	7	1	7	14	93	0	0	14	93	1	7	0	0
	Total	14	52	11	41	2	7	18	67	7	26	2	7	3	11	23	85	1	4	25	93	2	7	0	0
3	Public	7	26	18	67	2	7	21	78	5	19	1	3	8	30	17	63	2	7	25	93	1	4	1	3
	Private	23	61	9	24	6	15	27	71	8	21	3	8	0	0	32	84	6	16	32	84	2	5	4	11
	Total	30	46	27	42	8	12	48	74	13	20	4	6	8	12	49	75	8	13	57	88	3	5	5	7
4	Public	2	20	6	60	2	20	8	80	1	10	1	10	5	50	3	30	2	20	10	100	0	0	0	0
	Private	32	59	18	33	4	8	39	72	11	20	4	8	2	4	49	91	3	5	50	93	2	3	2	4
	Total	34	53	24	38	6	9	47	73	12	19	5	8	7	11	52	81	5	8	60	94	2	3	2	3

POINTS OF VIEW ON THE ENROLMENT OF IMMATURE CHILDREN IN ECS PROGRAMS (continued)

ZONE		STATEMENT 1: SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN WHO ARE ENROLLED IN A ECS PROGRAM BECAUSE OF IMMATURITY REQUIRE ECS PROGRAMMING ONLY.						STATEMENT 2: BEFORE ENTERING BASIC EDUCATION (FIRST GRADE, YEAR ONE, ETC.) EVERY CHILD IS ENTITLED TO ONE YEAR OF ECS PROGRAMMING SUPPORTED BY ECS GRANTS IRRESPECTIVE OF AGE. OF AGE.						STATEMENT 3: AFTER SUPPORT BY ECS GRANTS IN AN ECS PROGRAM FOR ONE YEAR, CERTAIN CHILDREN MAY, BECAUSE OF IMMATURITY, REQUIRE ADDITIONAL TIME IN AN ECS PROGRAM. THE FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ECS PROGRAMMING BEYOND THE FIRST YEAR SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN BY GRADE 1-12 AUTHORITIES/ GRANTS (NOT ECS GRANTS) EVEN IF CHILD IS IN AN ECS PROGRAM.						STATEMENT 4: IN CONSULTATION WITH ECS STAFF, PARENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DELAY THE ENROLMENT OF THEIR CHILDREN IN AN ECS PROGRAM.					
		AGREE	#	DISAGREE	#	UNSPECIFIED/ DOUBLE RESPON.	#	AGREE	#	DISAGREE	#	UNSPECIFIED/ DOUBLE RESPON.	#	AGREE	#	DISAGREE	#	UNSPECIFIED/ DOUBLE RESPON.	#	AGREE	#	DISAGREE	#	UNSPECIFIED/ DOUBLE RESPON.	#
5	Public	2	25	3	38	3	37	5	63	0	0	3	37	1	13	4	50	3	37	5	63	0	0	3	37
	Private	36	55	23	35	6	10	48	74	10	15	7	11	5	8	54	83	6	9	57	88	3	5	5	7
	Total	38	52	26	36	9	12	53	73	10	14	10	13	6	8	58	80	9	12	62	85	3	4	8	11
6	Public	7	50	4	29	3	21	10	71	1	7	3	22	3	21	8	57	3	22	11	79	1	7	2	14
	Private	14	45	12	39	5	16	20	65	8	26	3	9	2	7	24	77	5	16	26	84	1	3	4	13
	Total	21	47	16	36	8	17	30	67	9	20	6	13	5	11	32	71	8	18	37	82	2	4	6	14
TOTAL	Public	34	39	48	46	13	15	64	74	14	16	9	10	24	28	51	59	12	13	78	90	3	3	6	7
	Private	118	56	70	33	24	11	153	72	39	18	20	10	10	5	180	85	22	10	185	87	10	5	17	8
	Province	152	51	118	37	37	12	217	73	53	18	29	9	34	11	231	77	34	12	263	88	13	4	23	8

APPENDIX 7.9